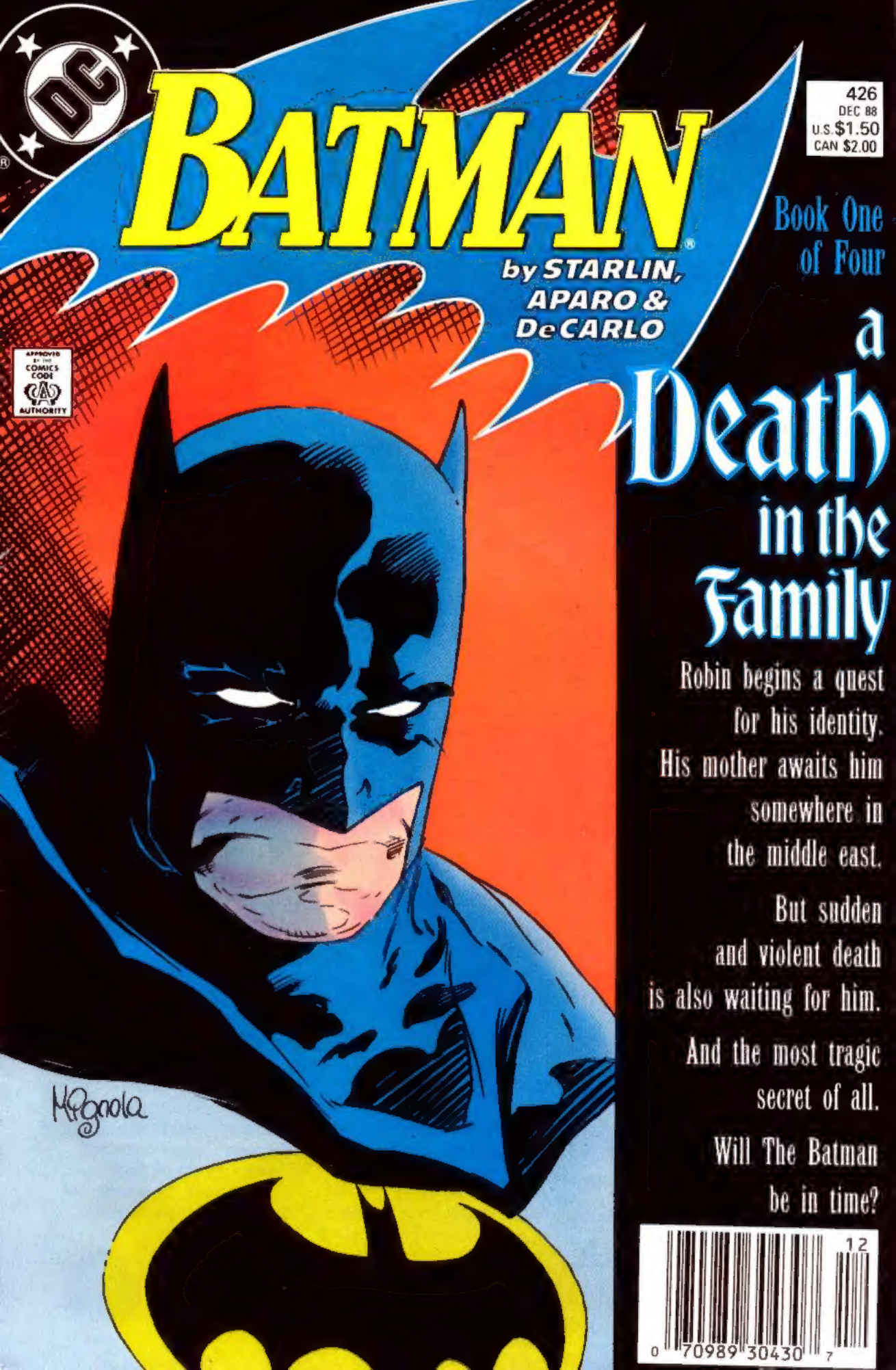
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by STARLIN, APARO & DeCARLO
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Book One of Four
A Death in the Family
Robin begins a quest for his identity. His mother awaits him somewhere in the middle east.
But sudden and violent death is also waiting for him.
And the most tragic secret of all.
Will The Batman be in time?
12
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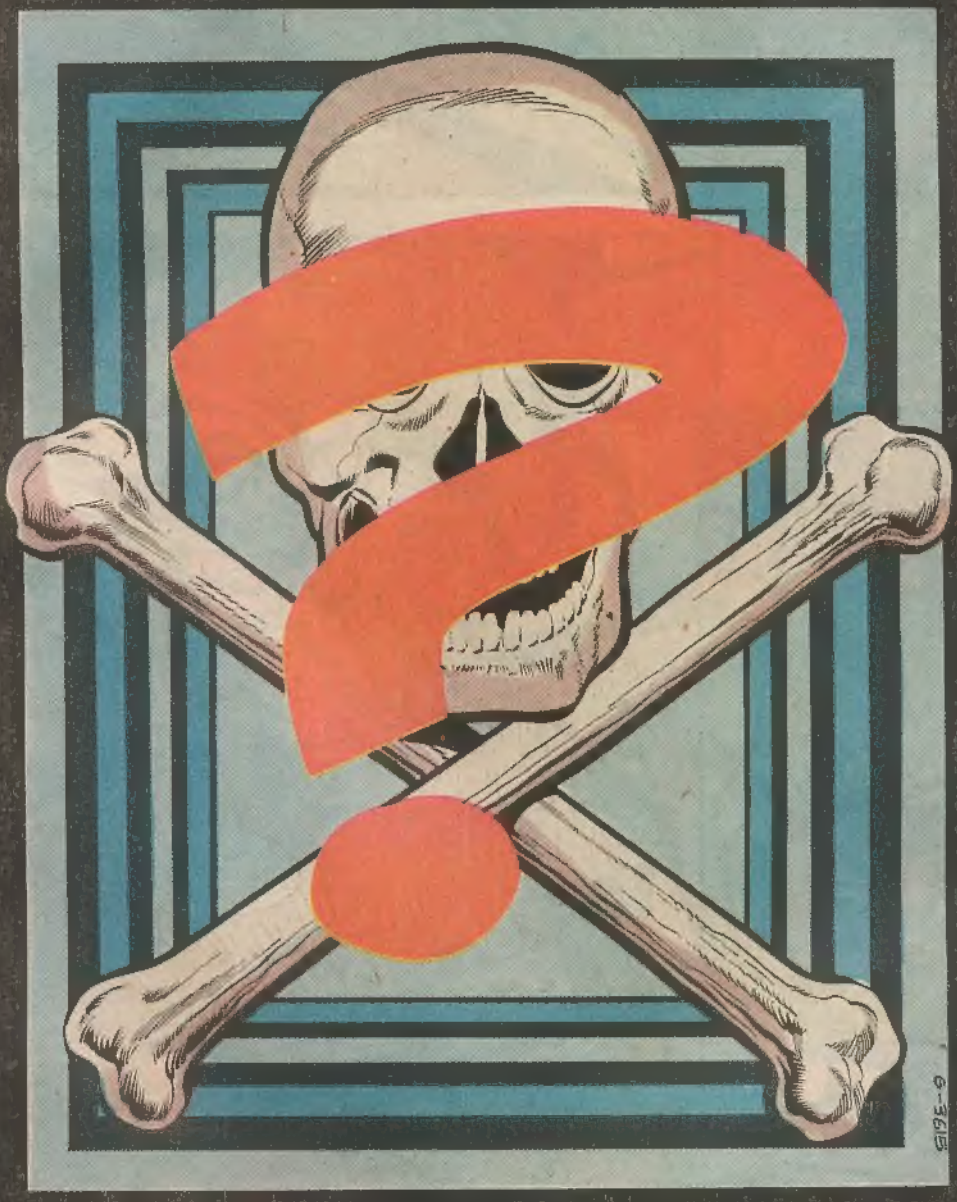
A DEATH in the FAMILY

Chapter 1



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IT TOOK ME THREE WEEKS TO TRACK DOWN THE KIDDIE-PORN RING'S MAIN WAREHOUSE.
THE BUST WAS ALL SET TO GO. ROBIN AND I WERE IN HIDING, WAITING FOR OUR POLICE BACKUP.
SUDDENLY MY PARTNER RUNS OUT OF PATIENCE. THAT'S THE WAY IT GOES SOMETIMES WITH THE BEST LAID PLANS OF MICE AND MEN.
ROBIN!! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!
WHAT I WAS TRAINED TO DO!
GONNA KICK SOME TAIL!!
2

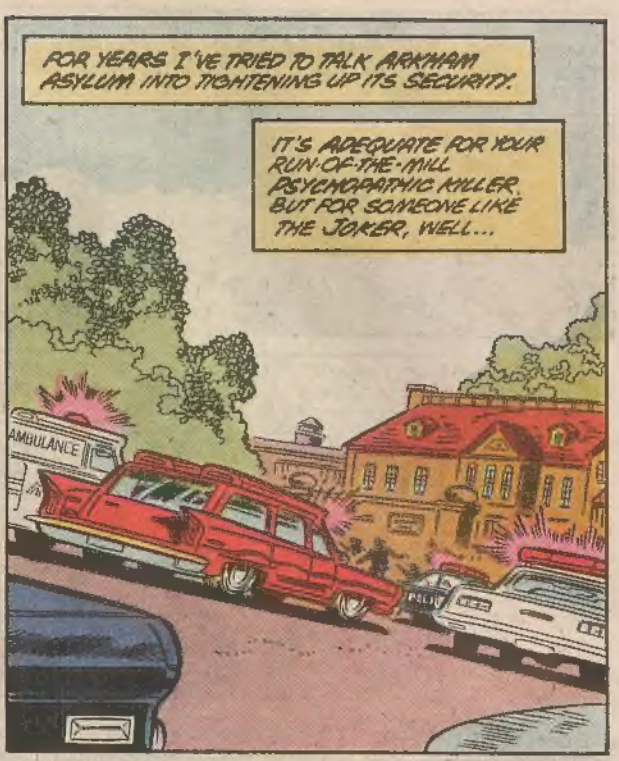
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN SOMETHING LIKE THIS WOULD HAPPEN.
WHUMP
ROBIN-- JASON TODD-- HAD BEEN ACTING OODLY OF LATE.
VERY MOODY.
RESENTFUL.
RECKLESS.
THAT ATTITUDE IS ABOUT TO GET HIM KILLED.
I BRING MY ENTIRE 210 POUNDS DOWN ON THEM, HARD.
THERE'LL BE SOME SERIOUS HOSPITAL TIME IN THEIR IMMEDIATE FUTURES.
I TRY TO TAKE IT A LITTLE EASIER ON THE OTHER GUNSELS.
NO TRACTION FOR THESE GUYS, JUST A NEED FOR EXTENSIVE DENTAL WORK.
I'VE LOST MY TASTE FOR THE WHOLE AFFAIR BY THE TIME I REACH THE LAST PSYCHOSTRAPHER.
I TOSS HIM TO ROBIN.
LET THE BOY FINISH HIM OFF.
HE OBVIOUSLY HAS A DANGEROUSLY HIGH LEVEL OF AGGRESSIVE ENERGY TO WORK OFF.
WAM
3

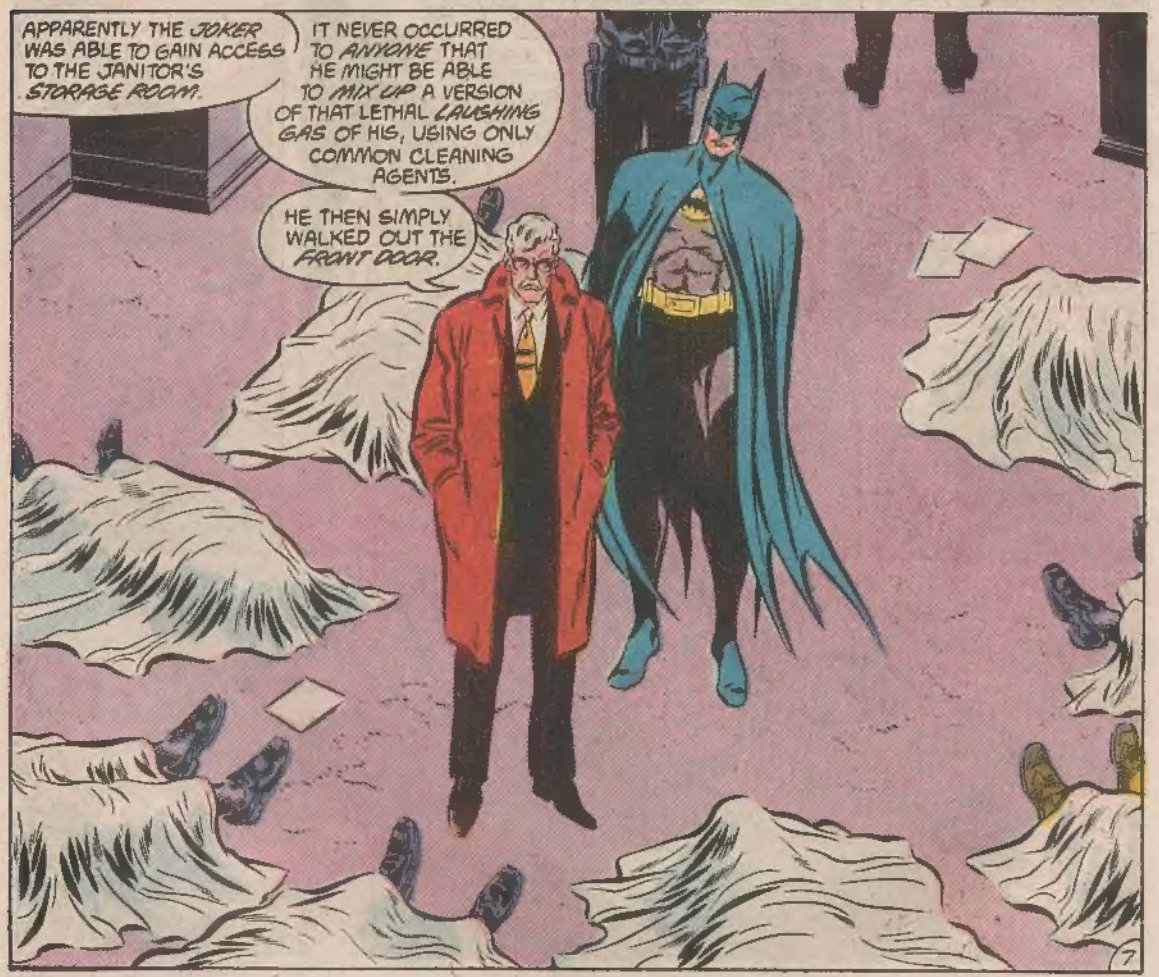
I TRY TO KEEP MY TEMPER IN CHECK.
I REMIND MYSELF JASON'S JUST A KID.
WELL, THAT TAKES CARE OF THOSE CREEPS.
WHAT THE DEVIL WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?!
DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO HOLD UP?!
YEAH, I HEARD YOU, BUT WE HAD THE GOODS ON THESE LOWLIFES.
I DIDN'T SEE ANY REASON TO WAIT. THERE WERE ONLY EIGHT OF THEM.
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? THERE ARE PROCEDURES EVEN ME HAVE TO FOLLOW.
I PROMISED TO LET GORDON IN ON THE BUST. YOU JUMPED THE GUN!
WHAT'S WORSE, YOU NEARLY GOT YOURSELF KILLED DOING IT.
NEAR MISSES DON'T COUNT.
WHAT DO YOU THINK WE'RE DOING HERE?!
PLAYING SOME GAME?
OF COURSE.
ALL LIFE'S A GAME.
4

WHEN I GET HOME TO WAYNE MANOR A COUPLE OF HOURS LATER, I FIND ROBIN'S NOT YET RETURNED.
IN A WAY I'M RELIEVED. IT GIVES ME A CHANCE TO TALK WITH MY OLDEST FRIEND.
I THINK I'VE MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE, ALFRED.
THE KID'S LOSING IT.
HE DIVED INTO THOSE THUGS LIKE SOMEONE LOOKING TO DIE.
I'VE BEEN NOTICING SOME DISQUIETING THINGS ABOUT MASTER JASON, MYSELF.
THE LAD AVOIDS TALKING ABOUT HIS PARENTS LATELY.
I'VE COME UPON HIM, SEVERAL TIMES, LOOKING AT THAT BATTERED OLD PHOTOGRAPH OF HIS MOTHER AND FATHER, CRYING.
WHEN HE'S SEEN ME, HE'S HIDDEN THE PICTURE AND LEFT THE ROOM, REFUSING TO TALK.
IN OTHER WORDS, I MAY HAVE STARTED JASON AS ROBIN BEFORE HE HAD A CHANCE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH HIS PARENTS' DEATHS.
BEING YOUR PARTNER IS NOT EXACTLY THE BEST SITUATION FOR A TEENAGER ADJUSTING TO SUCH A LOSS.
THEN I MUST TRY TO RECTIFY THE SITUATION.
JASON'S GOING OFF ACTIVE DUTY IMMEDIATELY.
5

AND I DON'T HAVE A THING TO SAY ABOUT IT, HUH?
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN STANDING THERE, JASON?
LONG ENOUGH.
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS ABOUT THIS?
I MOST DEFINITELY AM.
YOU'RE IN NO SHAPE EMOTIONALLY TO BE ON THE STREETS.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!
I HAVEN'T MADE THIS DECISION CAPRICIOUSLY, JASON.
A PERSON'S GOT TO HAVE HIS HEAD SCREWED ON RIGHT FOR THIS LINE OF WORK.
YOU'RE HURTING, KID.
YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF ANGER AND PAIN INSIDE OF YOU.
IT'S GOING TO TAKE TIME FOR YOU TO GET RID OF IT.
LET ME HELP YOU WORK THIS OUT.
WE CAN START BY TALKING ABOUT YOUR PARENTS.
YOU WANT TO TALK?
TALK TO ALFRED.
6

GOTHAM POST
JOKER ESCAPES AGAIN
CITY-WIDE MAN HUNT BEGINS

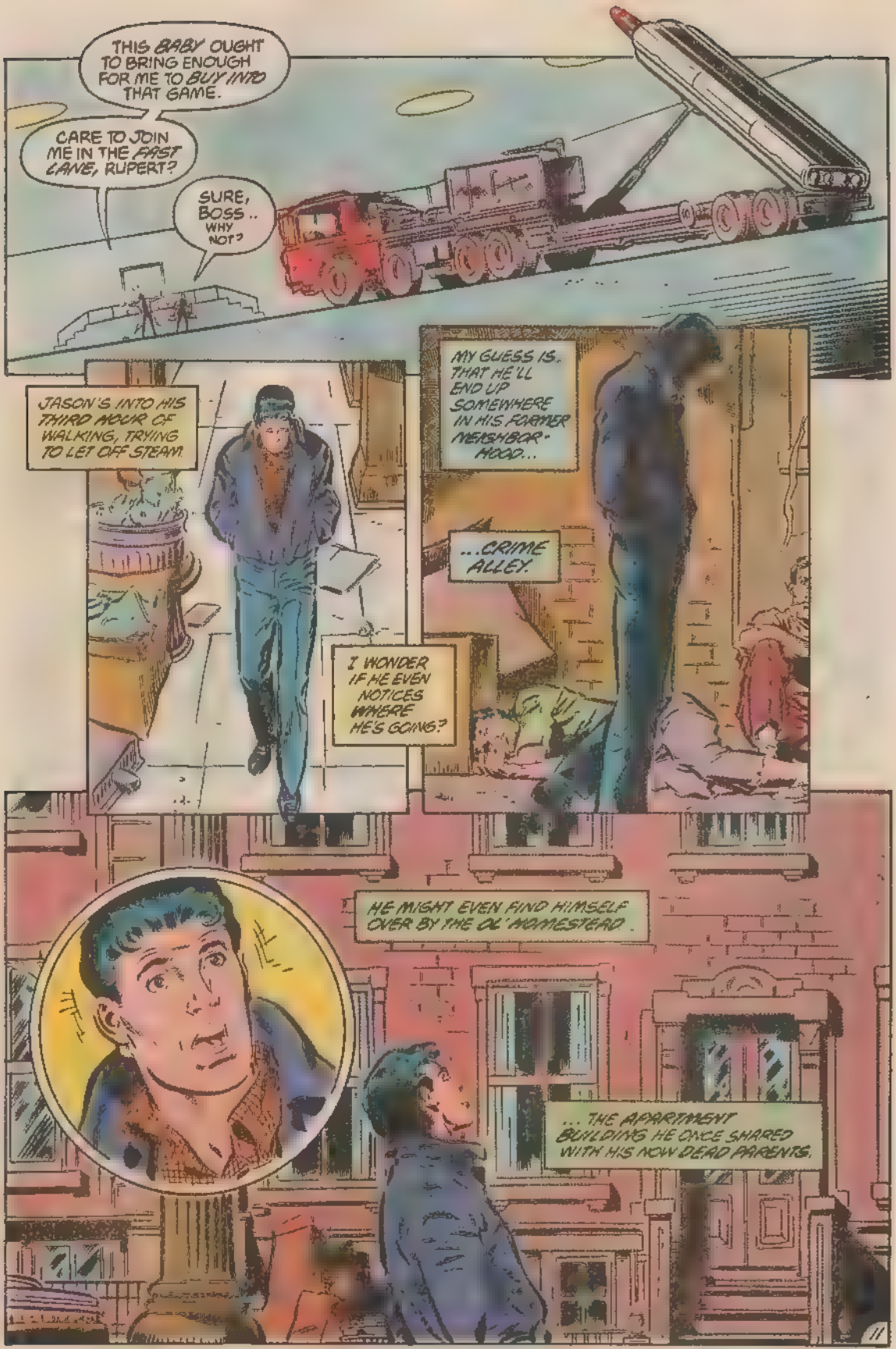

FOR YEARS I'VE TRIED TO TALK ARKHAM ASYLUM INTO TIGHTENING UP ITS SECURITY.
IT'S ADEQUATE FOR YOUR RUN-OF-THE-MILL PSYCHOPATHIC KILLER. BUT FOR SOMEONE LIKE THE JOKER, WELL...
AMBULANCE

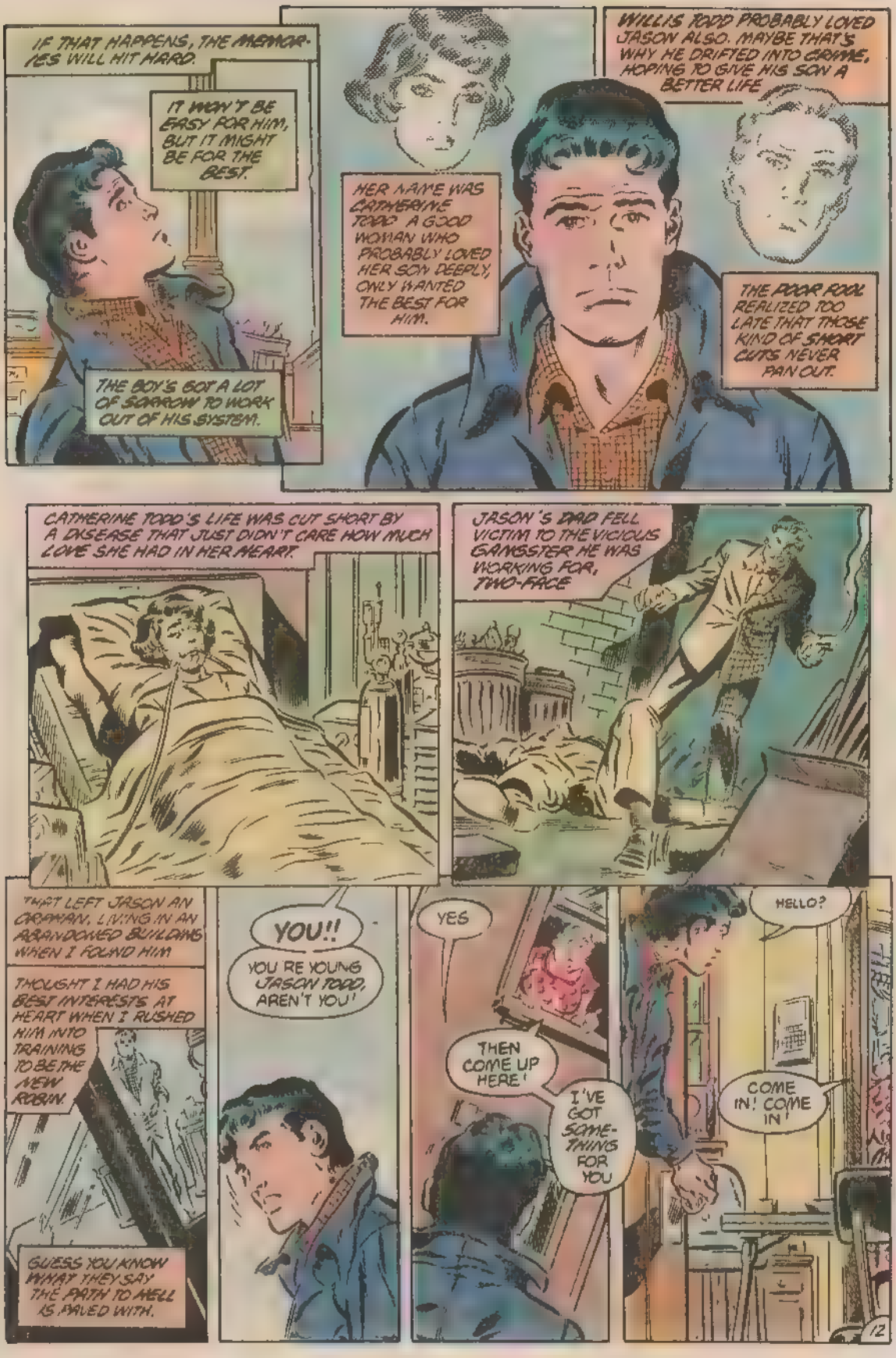

APPARENTLY THE JOKER WAS ABLE TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE JANITOR'S STORAGE ROOM.
IT NEVER OCCURRED TO ANYONE THAT HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO MIX UP A VERSION OF THAT LETHAL LAUGHING GAS OF HIS, USING ONLY COMMON CLEANING AGENTS.
HE THEN SIMPLY WALKED OUT THE FRONT DOOR.
7

LEAVING EIGHT DEAD MEN IN HIS WAKE.
THE KILLING NEVER STOPS WITH HIM.
I'VE PUT OUT AN APB ON THE JOKER AND HAVE ALERTED THE JUSTICE LEAGUE AND THE TITANS.
GOOD. EVERYONE'S GOING TO WANT A PIECE OF THE JOKER, AFTER WHAT HE DID TO BARBARA.
BUT I HOPE I COME ACROSS HIM FIRST.
I DOUBT HE'LL REMAIN ON THE LOOSE VERY LONG THIS TIME...
"... NOT WITH EVERY LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY IN THE COUNTRY MAKING HIM THEIR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY."
BOSS, WHY'D WE COME HERE? WE OUGHTA' BE HEADIN' FOR THE STATE LINE.
YOU'RE JUST TOO HOT TO BE STICKING AROUND GOTHAM, BOSS.
CRIPES, I DON'T THINK YA'D BE SAFE ANYWHERE IN THIS COUNTRY.
I'M WELL AWARE OF THAT FACT, RUPERT.
I HAPPEN TO BE CRAZY.
NOT STUPID.
THE JOKER KNOWS WHEN IT'S TIME TO TAKE A VACATION!
8

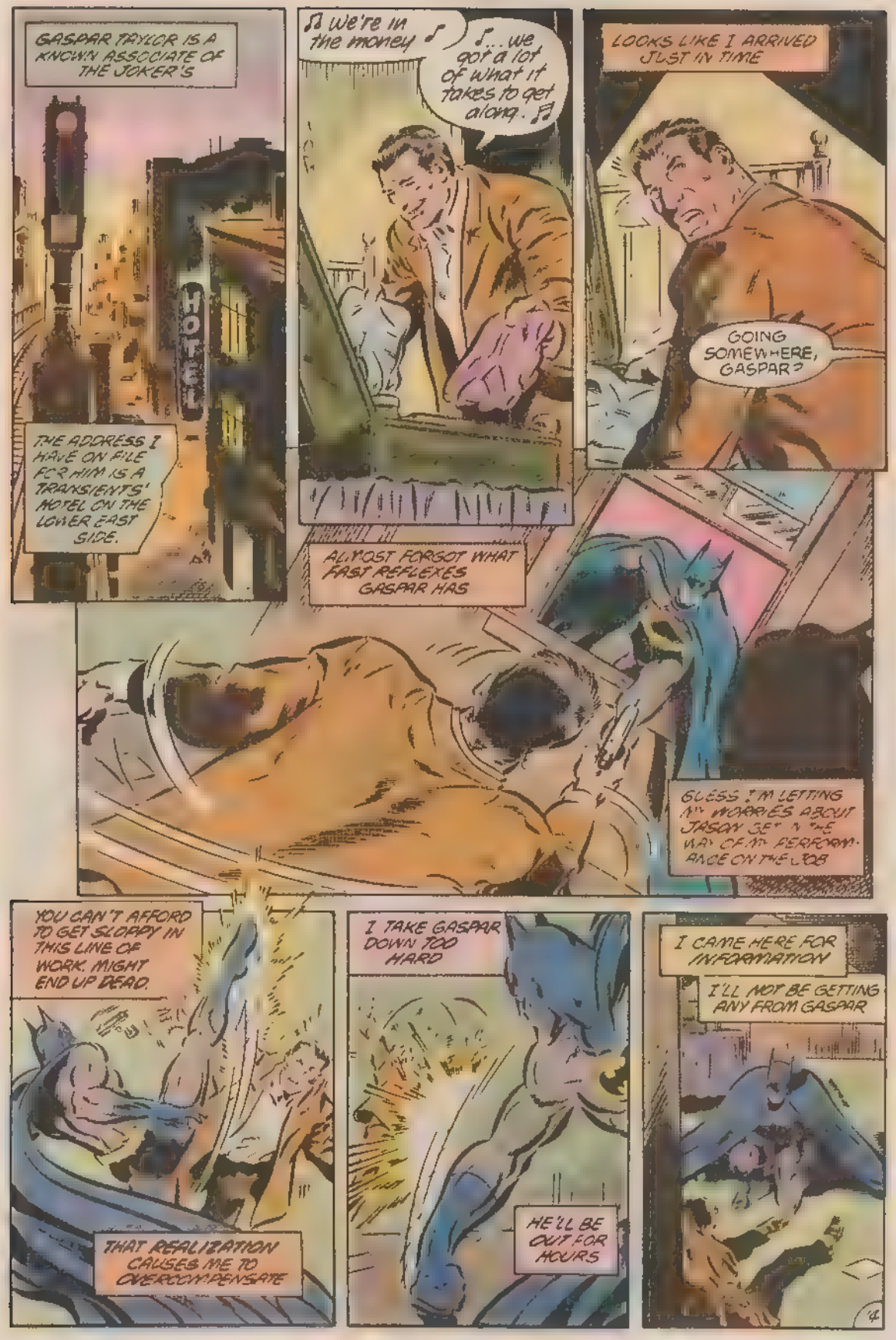
UNFORTUNATELY, THIS WILL HAVE TO BE A WORKING VACATION.
THE AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN BUSY SEIZING MOST OF MY HIDDEN ASSETS DURING MY LATEST STAY AT BEAUTIFUL ARKHAM ASYLUM.
THEY WAS PRETTY PICKED OFF AT WHAT YA DID TO GORDON'S DAUGHTER, BOSS.
THAT'S AWFULLY PETTY OF THEM.
THE WOMAN ONLY GOT WHAT SHE WAS OBVIOUSLY ASKING FOR.
BUT, BOSS, YA LEFT HER A CRIPPLE!
WELL, REMIND ME TO SEND HER A HANDFUL OF PENCILS AND A TIN CUP.
KLIK
FORTUNATELY, THE GOVERNMENT WASN'T ABLE TO UNEARTH ALL MY BURIED TREASURES.
IN HERE'S SOMETHING I WAS SAVING TO BREAK UP THE BOREDOM OF SOME FUTURE RAINY AFTERNOON.
MY VERY OWN CRUISE MISSILE!!
9

HOW IN BLAZES DID YOU COME BY THIS, BOSS?
THROUGH A FRIEND OF MINE IN THE MILITARY WHO OWED ME A BIG FAVOR.
I PLANNED TO FIRE IT AT CITY HALL SOMEDAY
BUT I GUESS I'LL NOW HAVE TO SELL IT TO SOME ARAB TERRORISTS INSTEAD
IT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN THINK OF TO SAFELY REPLENISH MY SEVERELY DEPLETED FUNDS.
YOU AND I WILL DISMANTLE THIS FIRECRACKER AND SHIP IT TO THE MIDDLE EAST.
WE'LL NEVER GET IT OUTTA THE COUNTRY, BOSS! THAT ROCKET'S GOTTA BE HOTTER THAN EVEN YOU ARE!
NOT TO WORRY, RUPERT MY LAD
ON PAPER, THIS CRUISE MISSILE DOESN'T EVEN EXIST. NO ONE KNOWS IT'S MISSING
IT'S ANOTHER FAVOR MY MILITARY FRIEND DID FOR ME BEFORE HIS UNTIMELY DEMISE.
YOU KNOW, RUPERT, IN A WAY I THINK THINGS HAVE WORKED OUT FOR THE BEST
THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO MAKE A FEW CHANGES IN MY LIFE
CRIME HASN'T BEEN ALL THAT GOOD TO ME OF LATE.
I'VE BEEN SPENDING MORE TIME IN ARKHAM ASYLUM THAN OUT
I'VE BEEN SERIOUSLY THINKING OF GETTING INTO A NEW LINE OF WORK.
... SOME ENDEAVOR WHERE MY SPECIAL TALENTS WILL BE PROPERLY APPRECIATED.
SOMETHING LIKE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS!
10


THIS BABY OUGHT TO BRING ENOUGH FOR ME TO BUY INTO THAT GAME.
CARE TO JOIN ME IN THE FAST LANE, RUPERT?
SURE, BOSS.. WHY NOT?
JASON'S INTO HIS THIRD HOUR OF WALKING, TRYING TO LET OFF STEAM.
I WONDER IF HE EVEN NOTICES WHERE HE'S GOING?
MY GUESS IS, THAT HE'LL END UP SOMEWHERE IN HIS FORMER NEIGHBOR-HOOD...
...CRIME ALLEY.
HE MIGHT EVEN FIND HIMSELF OVER BY THE OL' HOMESTEAD.
... THE APARTMENT BUILDING HE ONCE SHARED WITH HIS NOW DEAD PARENTS.


IF THAT HAPPENS, THE MEMORIES WILL HIT HARD.
IT WON'T BE EASY FOR HIM, BUT IT MIGHT BE FOR THE BEST.
THE BOY'S GOT A LOT OF SORROW TO WORK OUT OF HIS SYSTEM.
HER NAME WAS CATHERINE TODD. A GOOD WOMAN WHO PROBABLY LOVED HER SON DEEPLY, ONLY WANTED THE BEST FOR HIM.
WILLIS TODD PROBABLY LOVED JASON ALSO. MAYBE THAT'S WHY HE DRIFTED INTO CRIME, HOPING TO GIVE HIS SON A BETTER LIFE.
THE POOR FOOL REALIZED TOO LATE THAT THOSE KIND OF SHORT CUTS NEVER PAN OUT.
CATHERINE TODD'S LIFE WAS CUT SHORT BY A DISEASE THAT JUST DIDN'T CARE HOW MUCH LOVE SHE HAD IN HER HEART.
JASON'S DAD FELL VICTIM TO THE VICIOUS GANGSTER HE WAS WORKING FOR, TWO-FACE.
THAT LEFT JASON AN ORPHAN, LIVING IN AN ABANDONED BUILDING WHEN I FOUND HIM.
I THOUGHT I HAD HIS BEST INTERESTS AT HEART WHEN I RUSHED HIM INTO TRAINING TO BE THE NEW ROBIN.
GUESS YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY. THE PATH TO HELL IS PAVED WITH...
YOU!!
YOU'RE YOUNG JASON TODD, AREN'T YOU!
YES
THEN COME UP HERE!
I'VE GOT SOMETHINGS FOR YOU
HELLO?
COME IN! COME IN!
12

YOU WERE A FRIEND OF MY MOTHER'S. MRS. WALKER, WASN'T IT?
THAT'S RIGHT. HOW YOU BEEN DOING?
GETTING BY
YOU KINDA' DISAPPEARED RIGHT AFTER YOUR MOTHER DIED
JUVENILE AUTHORITIES WERE LOOKING TO PUT ME IN A STATE HOME. DIDN'T WANNA GO.
CAN'T BLAME YOU FOR THAT.
BUT WHEN NO ONE CLAIMED YOUR FAMILY'S POSSESSIONS, THE LANDLORD SOLD THEM OFF.
I WAS ABLE TO SAVE THIS STUFF FOR YOU, 'CASE YOU EVER CAME BACK
RMD
AFRAID IT'S A LITTLE WATER DAMAGED. DARN LEAKY ROOFS!
THE OWNER'S TOO CHEAP TO FIX 'EM
PHOTOGRAPHS!
PERSONAL PAPERS
THOUGHT IT'D BE STUFF YOU MIGHT LIKE TO HAVE
THIS IS TERRIFIC! HOW CAN I EVER THANK YOU.
AIN'T NOTHING
NOW I GOT TO SHOO YOU OUT OF HERE, LAD
GOT SHOPPING I GOTTA DO.
NOW YOU TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, SON
13


GASPAR TAYLOR IS A KNOWN ASSOCIATE OF THE JOKER'S
HOTEL
THE ADDRESS I HAVE ON FILE FOR HIM IS A TRANSIENTS' HOTEL ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE.
♫ We're in the money ♫
♫ ...we got a lot of what it takes to get along. ♫
LOOKS LIKE I ARRIVED JUST IN TIME
GOING SOMEWHERE, GASPAR?
ALMOST FORGOT WHAT FAST REFLEXES GASPAR HAS
GUESS I'M LETTING ALL WORRIES ABOUT JASON GET IN THE WAY OF AN PERFORMANCE ON THE JOB
YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO GET SLOPPY IN THIS LINE OF WORK. MIGHT END UP DEAD.
THAT REALIZATION CAUSES ME TO OVERCOMPENSATE
I TAKE GASPAR DOWN TOO HARD
HE'LL BE OUT FOR HOURS
I CAME HERE FOR INFORMATION
I'LL NOT BE GETTING ANY FROM GASPAR
4

BUT MAYBE GASPAR'S LUGGAGE WILL TELL ME A TALE OR TWO
A PASSPORT AND A VISA FOR LEBANON.
INTERESTING.
I SPENT THE NEXT FEW HOURS TRYING TO TRACK DOWN MORE OF THE JOKER'S FORMER HENCHMEN.
NO LUCK
THEY ALL SEEM TO HAVE DISAPPEARED.
ALL VACATIONING IN LEBANON, MAYBE?
WHEN I PHONE HOME AT NIGHTFALL, I LEARN THAT JASON HAS FINALLY RETURNED.
ALFRED INFORMS ME THAT HE WENT DIRECTLY TO HIS ROOM, REQUESTING HE NOT BE DISTURBED.
PHOTOGRAPHS ARE A BRIDGE TO THE PAST
BLACK AND WHITE REMINDERS OF THE WAY THINGS USED TO BE.
LINKS TO THOSE WHO ARE NO LONGER WITH US.
PRICELESS TREASURES
15

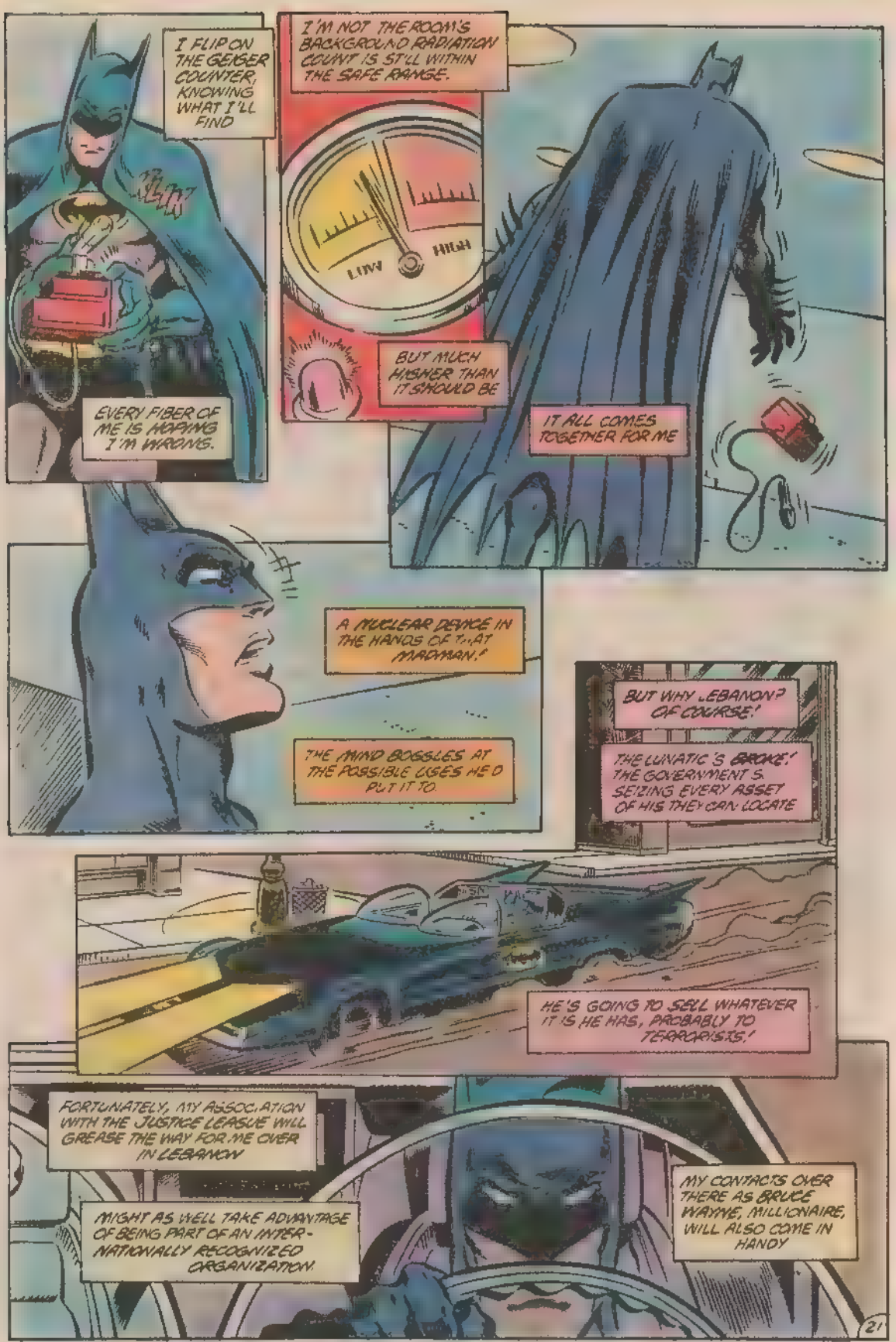
THE BOX ALSO CONTAINS SOME OF HIS PARENTS, PERSONAL PAPERS.
A DEED FOR AN ACRE OF LAND IN VIRGINIA A LAPSED INSURANCE POLICY.
SOME OF THE PAPERS ARE HIS OWN
REPORT CARD
REPORT CARD
OLD GRADE SCHOOL REPORT CARDS.
HIS BIRTH CERTIFICATE, WHICH CONTAINS.
. A GUT-WRENCHING SURPRISE!
THERE'S HIS OWN NAME ON IT.
Birth
Jason Peter Todd
JASON PETER TODD, JUST AS IT SHOULD BE
THERE'S HIS FATHER'S NAME, ALL CORRECT AND PROPER
Willis Todd
THE TROUBLE LIES WITH HIS MOTHER'S NAME.
JASON'S MOTHER'S NAME WAS CATHERINE, NOT "S" SOMETHING!
HER LAST NAME'S WATER DAMAGED, SMEARED, UNREADABLE.
"S"?
WHO?
HOW?
WHY?
IT MUST TAKE HIM SOME TIME BEFORE HE ACCEPTS THE TRUTH.
AS IMPOSSIBLE AS IT SEEMS, HE FINALLY GRASPS THE REALIZATION THAT.
...CATHERINE TODD WASN'T HIS REAL MOTHER!
BUT THEN WHO WAS?
16

HOW TO FIND OUT THE TRUTH?
HIS MOTHER AND FATHER ARE DEAD.
CAN'T ASK THEM
MOTHER?
STEP-MOTHER--A BITTER REALIZATION.
HIS REAL MOTHER IS SOMEONE HE'S NEVER MET...
...SOMEONE WHO MAY STILL BE ALIVE!
THERE HAS TO BE A WAY TO FIND OUT!
I TAUGHT THE BOY HOW TO BE A DETECTIVE.
HE USES THAT SKILL.
AN ADDRESS BOOK!!
MY FATHER'S ADDRESS BOOK
LOOK FOR WOMEN WHOSE FIRST NAMES START WITH AN "S".
THERE'S THREE OF THEM.
ONLY TROUBLE IS, THESE ADDRESSES HAVE GOT TO BE SEVERAL YEARS OUT OF DATE.
HOW DO I LOCATE THEM AFTER ALL THIS TIME?
OF COURSE! THE COMPUTER IN THE BATCAVE.

WELL, IT TOOK ME ALL NIGHT SCOURING THE SYSTEM, BUT I'VE FINALLY FOUND ALL THREE WOMEN
'COURSE MY LUCK'S RUNN NG TRUE TO FORM THEY RE ALL CURRENTLY OUT OF THE COUNTRY..
...ALL IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA, OF ALL PLACES,
SHARMIN ROSEN, EMMIGRATED TO ISRAEL IN 1982 AND CURRENTLY WORKS FOR THE ISRAELI SECRET SERVICE
SHIVA WOOSAN, A LADY WITH A SHADOWY PAST, SUSPECTED OF BEING A MERCENARY, OPERATING OUT OF LEBANON AT THE MOMENT
DR SHEILA HAYWOOD, WORKING ON FAMINE RELIEF EFFORTS IN ETHIOPIA.
SO WHAT DO I DO NOW?
TAKE WHAT I HAVE TO BRUCE, ASK FOR HIS HELP?
NO WAY!
I KNOW WHAT HE'D SAY
"YOU'RE IN NO SHAPE TO BE RUNNING OFF ON THIS TYPE OF INVESTIGATION!"
BESIDES, BRUCE WOULDN'T CARE ABOUT FINDING MY REAL MOTHER
ALL HE GETS OFF ON IS CATCHING CROOKS.
HE PROBABLY COULDN'T EVEN UNDERSTAND WHY I'D WANT TO LOCATE THE WOMAN
8

THIS JOB'S ALL MINE.
CAN'T DEPEND ON ANYONE FOR HELP.
'COURSE I HAVE TO THANK BRUCE FOR FINANCING MY LITTLE ADVENTURE.
VERY THOUGHTFUL OF HIM TO PROVIDE ME WITH ALL THIS PLASTIC GOLD.
FEEL KIND OF SHABBY RUNNING OFF LIKE THIS
BRUCE AND ALFRED HAVE BEEN REAL KIND TO ME.
BUT I GUESS I REALLY DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE IN THE MATTER, DO I?
I MEAN... SHE'S MY MOM.
THIS IS A GREAT PLANE, JOKER.
WE GOT THE WHOLE CRUISE MISSILE PACKED INTO IT WITH ROOM TO SPARE.
YES, IT'S VERY ROOMY
AND THE U.S. NAVY SHOULDN'T REALIZE IT'S MISSING UNTIL SOMETIME TOMORROW!
19

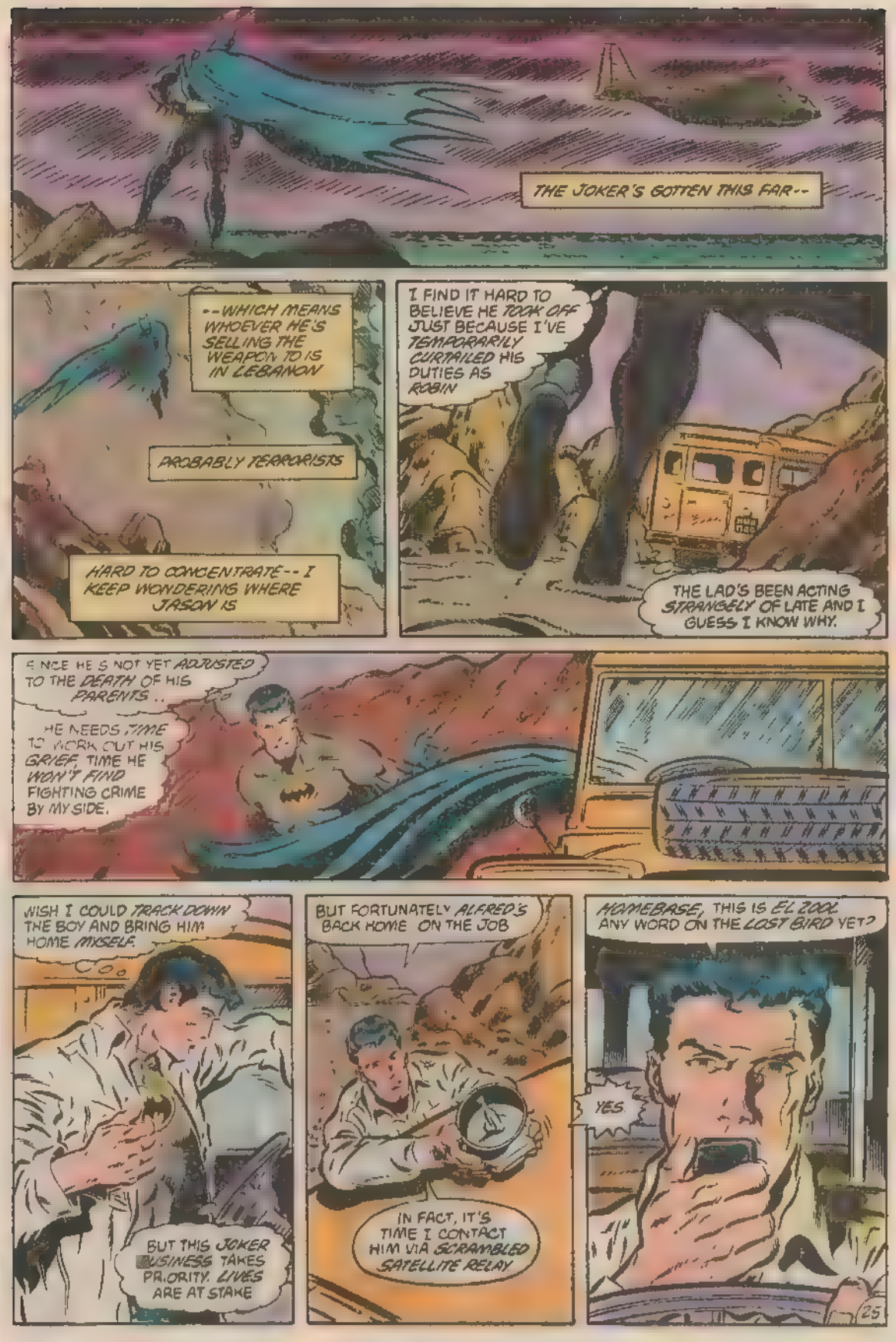
BY THEN WE'LL BE SETTLED AND DOING BUSINESS IN LEBANON.
THIS IS ALL WORKING OUT QUITE DELIGHTFULLY!
HOW ABOUT A RUM AND COKE?
FIRST CLASS SECTION OR NOT, CHAMP, YOU DON'T LOOK RIBE ENOUGH FOR RUM
HOW ABOUT A STRAIGHT COKE INSTEAD
OKAY.
I'M ON MY WAY, MOM.
I TUMBLE UPON THE JOKER'S WAREHOUSE HIDEOUT JUST BEFORE DAWN.
NO ONE'S HOME.
LOOKS LIKE HE LEFT IN A HURRY LEFT A REAL MESS BEHIND
AN INTERESTING MESS, THOUGH. SOPHISTICATED TOOLS AND A GEIGER COUNTER
TIRE TRACKS ON THE FLOOR A HEAVY DUTY TRUCK.
I RECOGNIZE THE TREADS DESIGN AS A TYPE ONLY THE MILITARY USES
20


I FLIP ON THE GEIGER COUNTER, KNOWING WHAT I'LL FIND
I'M NOT THE ROOM'S BACKGROUND RADIATION COUNT IS STILL WITHIN THE SAFE RANGE.
LOW
HIGH
BUT MUCH HIGHER THAN IT SHOULD BE
EVERY FIBER OF ME IS HOPING I'M WRONG.
IT ALL COMES TOGETHER FOR ME
A NUCLEAR DEVICE IN THE HANDS OF THAT MADMAN!
THE MIND BOGGLES AT THE POSSIBLE USES HE'D PUT IT TO.
BUT WHY LEBANON? OF COURSE!
THE LUNATIC'S BROKE! THE GOVERNMENT'S SEIZING EVERY ASSET OF HIS THEY CAN LOCATE
HE'S GOING TO SELL WHATEVER IT IS HE HAS, PROBABLY TO TERRORISTS!
FORTUNATELY, MY ASSOCIATION WITH THE JUSTICE LEAGUE WILL GREASE THE WAY FOR ME OVER IN LEBANON
MIGHT AS WELL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF BEING PART OF AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATION.
MY CONTACTS OVER THERE AS BRUCE WAYNE, MILLIONAIRE, WILL ALSO COME IN HANDY

MASTER BRUCE, I'M SO GLAD YOU'VE RETURNED
WHAT'S THE TROUBLE, ALFRED?
I JUST FOUND THIS IN YOUNG JASON'S ROOM A SHORT WHILE AGO.
WHAT?
IT'S A FAREWELL NOTE
JASON HAS RUN AWAY.
CHOICES
DO I STAY IN GOTHAM TO LIVE UP TO MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS THE BOY'S GUARDIAN?
OR DO I GO AFTER THAT MADMAN AND HIS NUCLEAR WEAPON?
IT'S PAINFULLY OBVIOUS WHICH PATH I MUST CHOOSE.
THE QUESTION IS HOW WILL I EVER BE ABLE TO LIVE WITH THIS DECISION?

Chapter 2
THE NORTH-WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN COAST OF LEBANON.
BEFORE COMING HERE, I CHECKED IN WITH RALPH BUNDY, A FRIEND OF MINE AT THE C.I.A.
THAT'S HOW I FOUND OUT ABOUT THE HIJACKED C-130 TRANSPORT PLANE.
THE PLANE HAD FALLEN INTO THE HANDS OF A SHIITE EXTREMIST GROUP, WHO REFUSES TO GIVE IT BACK TO UNCLE SAM.
SO I MADE A DEAL WITH BUNDY.
I'D FIX IT SO HIS NAVAL COMMANDOS COULD FLY IT OUT OF HERE...

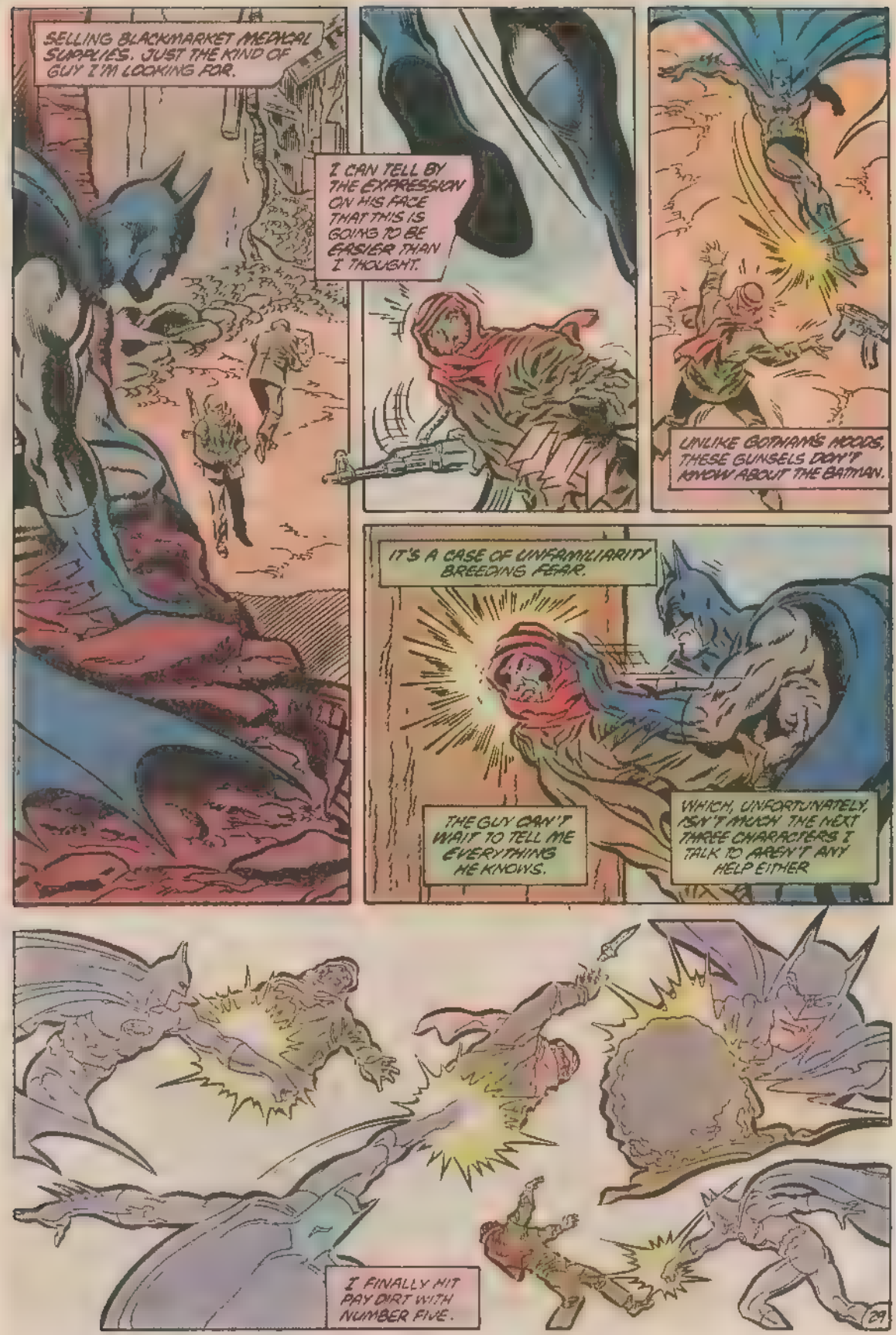
...IF I GOT TO EXAMINE THE PLANE BEFORE IT TOOK OFF
I'VE A FAIRLY GOOD IDEA WHO FLEW IT HERE
THE DEAD NAVAL PILOT, IN THE COCKPIT, CONFIRMS MY SUSPICIONS
THIS IS THE JOKER'S HANDIWORK, ALL RIGHT
MY MINI-GEIGER COUNTER SHOWS ME THAT THERE'S A HIGH BACKGROUND RADIATION COUNT IN THE LOADING BAY.
WHATEVER THE NUCLEAR DEVICE IS THAT MY OLD ENEMY HAS ACQUIRED, IT'S WARHEAD IS LEAKING SLIGHTLY
IF THE JOKER'S NOT CAREFUL, HE'S GOING TO END UP WITH RADIATION POISONING
I SHOULD BE THAT LUCKY
WE'RE TAKING OFF YOU COMING?
NO.


THE JOKER'S GOTTEN THIS FAR--
--WHICH MEANS WHOEVER HE'S SELLING THE WEAPON TO IS IN LEBANON
PROBABLY TERRORISTS
HARD TO CONCENTRATE-- I KEEP WONDERING WHERE JASON IS
I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE HE TOOK OFF JUST BECAUSE I'VE TEMPORARILY CURTAILED HIS DUTIES AS ROBIN
THE LAD'S BEEN ACTING STRANGELY OF LATE AND I GUESS I KNOW WHY.
E NCE HE S NOT YET ADJUSTED TO THE DEATH OF HIS PARENTS ..
HE NEEDS TIME TO WORK OUT HIS GRIEF. TIME HE WON'T FIND FIGHTING CRIME BY MY SIDE.
WISH I COULD TRACK DOWN THE BOY AND BRING HIM HOME MYSELF.
BUT THIS JOKER BUSINESS TAKES PRIORITY. LIVES ARE AT STAKE
BUT FORTUNATELY ALFRED'S BACK HOME ON THE JOB
IN FACT, IT'S TIME I CONTACT HIM VIA SCRAMBLED SATELLITE RELAY
HOMEBASE, THIS IS EL ZOOL ANY WORD ON THE LOST BIRD YET?
YES.

I JUST COMPLETED A COMPUTER CHECK ON ALL CREDIT CARDS ISSUED TO OUR RUNAWAY CHARGE
HE LISTED, YESTERDAY, AS A PASSENGER ON A LATE NIGHT FLIGHT TO ISRAEL
I'LL CHECK IT OUT AFTER I'M DONE HERE IN LEBANON
CALL YOU AGAIN IN 12 HOURS OVER AND OUT
WHAT'S HE DOING IN ISRAEL?
I TRIED TO GO THROUGH CHANNELS, PLAY IT STRAIGHT.
I REALLY DID!
BUT THEY JUST PLAIN REFUSED TO TELL ME WHERE SHARMIN ROSIN IS.
GUESS I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY.
GOVERNMENTS DON'T WILLINGLY GIVE OUT THE LOCATIONS OF THEIR SECRET AGENTS, STANDARD PROCEDURE.
BUT NATIONAL SECURITY SECRETS DON'T CUT A LOT OF ICE WITH ME
I JUST GOTTA KNOW WHERE MS ROSEN IS.

THE LADY MAY BE MY REAL MOTHER
FORTUNATELY, EVERYTHING'S KEPT ON COMPUTERS THESE DAYS
... EVEN WHERE TO FIND SECRET AGENTS, IN CASE YOU NEED THEM.
WOULDN'T YOU KNOW IT! SHE'S OUT OF THE COUNTRY, UNDER-COVER IN BEIRUT.
AT LEAST THEY'VE GOT THE HOTEL SHE'S STAYING AT LISTED
NO DIRECT FLIGHTS THERE FROM HERE I'LL HAVE TO DO SOME PLANE HOPPING
STILL SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET THERE BY NOON, TOMORROW
BEIRUT, A CITY IN TURMOIL
A CAPITAL TORN APART BY ARMED POLARIZED FACTIONS, EACH TRYING TO SEIZE CONTROL.
SEEMS EVERYONE'S EITHER ARMED OR CRIPPLED BY THE WAR. YOU CAN FEEL THE TENSION ON THE STREETS
THIS IS NOT A SAFE PLACE FOR AN AMERICAN.

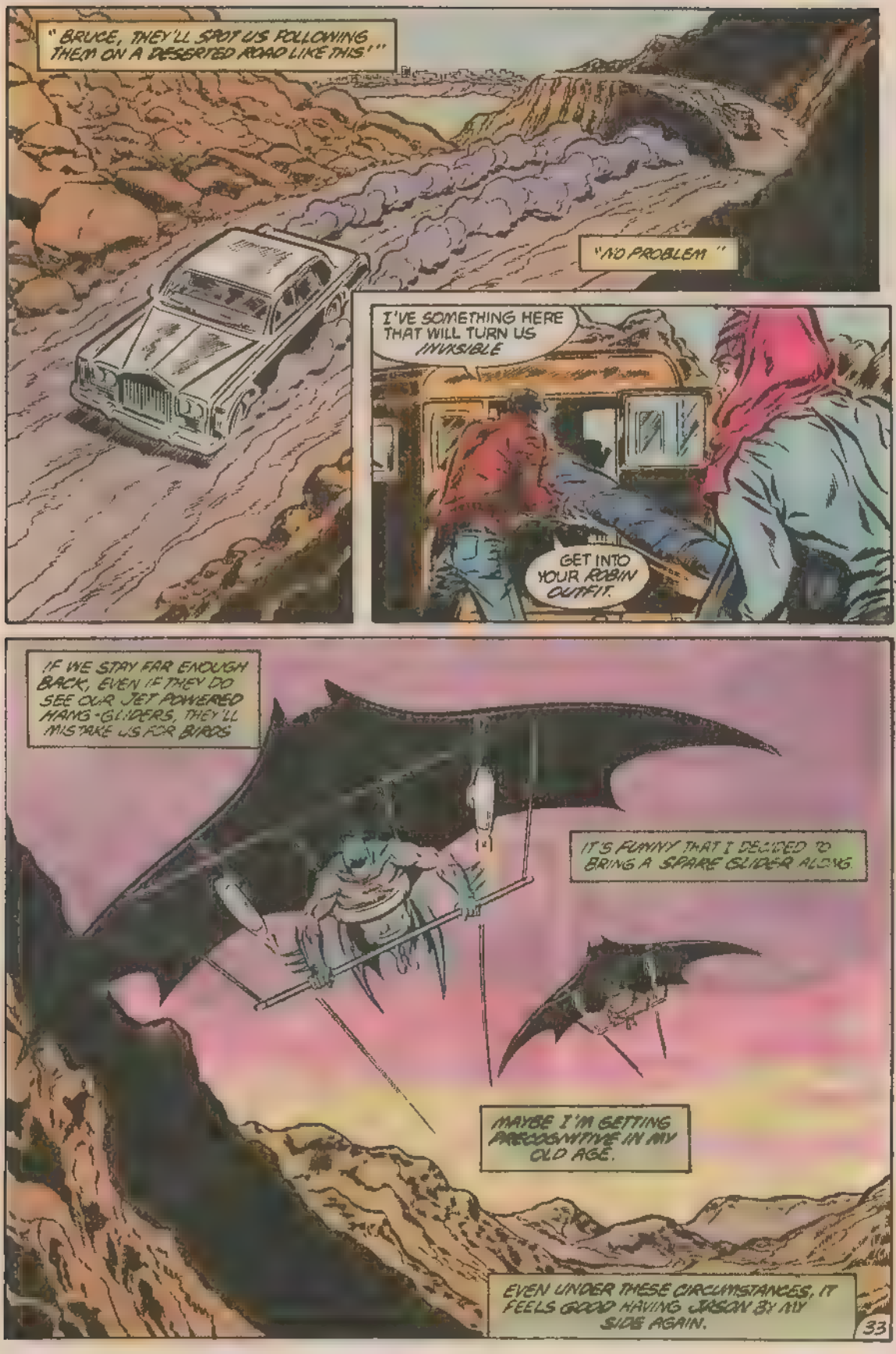
THAT'S WHY I'M TRAVELING UNDER A PHONY NORTHERN IRISH PASSPORT.
CHANCES ARE THE JOKER CAME TO BEIRUT TO CONTACT HIS CUSTOMERS.
IT'D BE TOO DANGEROUS, EVEN FOR HIM, TO TAKE HIS PRIZE DIRECTLY INTO THE BEK AA' VALLEY WHERE THE RADICAL ELEMENTS ARE ENTRENCHED.
(TAXI!)*
* Translated from Farsi.
TROUBLE IS, BEIRUT'S A BIG CITY
(WHERE TO, EFFENDI?)
I'M HOPING THIS CABBY CAN HELP ME
(TAKE ME TO THE WORST SECTION OF THIS CITY, A PLACE WHERE CRIMINALS GATHER)
HUH?!
THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR
WEAPON SMUGGLING HAS GOT TO BE THIS AREA'S LEADING
SELLING INFORMATION PROBABLY RUNS A CLOSE SECOND.
BUT I HAVEN'T GOT TIME TO JOKER AND BARGAIN
A CHANGE OF CLOTHES WILL MAKE IT EASIER TO TAKE THE DIRECT APPROACH.
28


SELLING BLACKMARKET MEDICAL SUPPLIES. JUST THE KIND OF GUY I'M LOOKING FOR.
I CAN TELL BY THE EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE THAT THIS IS GOING TO BE EASIER THAN I THOUGHT.
UNLIKE GOTHAM'S HOODS, THESE GUNSELS DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE BATMAN.
IT'S A CASE OF UNFAMILIARITY BREEDING FEAR.
THE GUY CAN'T WAIT TO TELL ME EVERYTHING HE KNOWS.
WHICH, UNFORTUNATELY, ISN'T MUCH. THE NEXT THREE CHARACTERS I TALK TO AREN'T ANY HELP EITHER
I FINALLY HIT PAY DIRT WITH NUMBER FIVE.
29

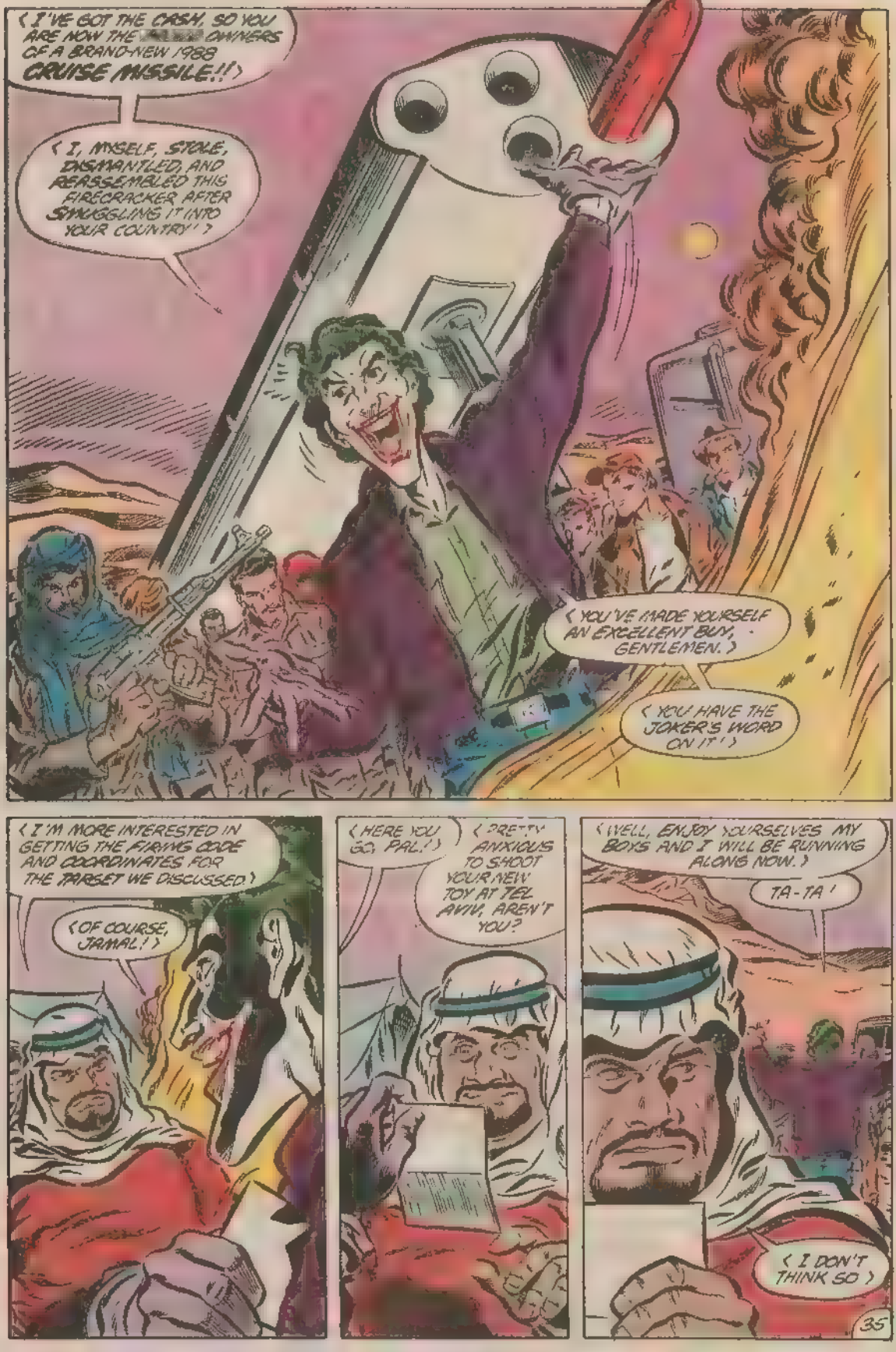
(THERE IS A MAN, STAYING AT THE MOTEL BLU, OFFERING TO SELL THE OBJECT YOU SEEK)
(HIS NAME IS BRANDO)
PETER BRANDO?!
(YES)
THWACK
THANKS
HE SHOULD BE OUT FOR A FEW HOURS OR SO
DON'T WANT HIM REACHING BRANDO BEFORE I DO.
THERE AREN'T MANY HIDING PLACES IN LEBANON, SO WHAT HAPPENS NEXT ISN'T REALLY MUCH OF A COINCIDENCE.
HOTEL BLU
THIS IS THE HOTEL SHARMIN ROSEN IS SUPPOSE TO BEING STAYING AT
GUESS I JUST WA T HERE FOR HER TO SHOW UP
BUT WHAT THEN?
DO I JUST WALK UP AND ASK HER IF SHE'S MY MOTHER?
HOTEL BLU
GUESS I HAVEN'T REALLY THOUGHT THIS ALL OUT YET
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
20

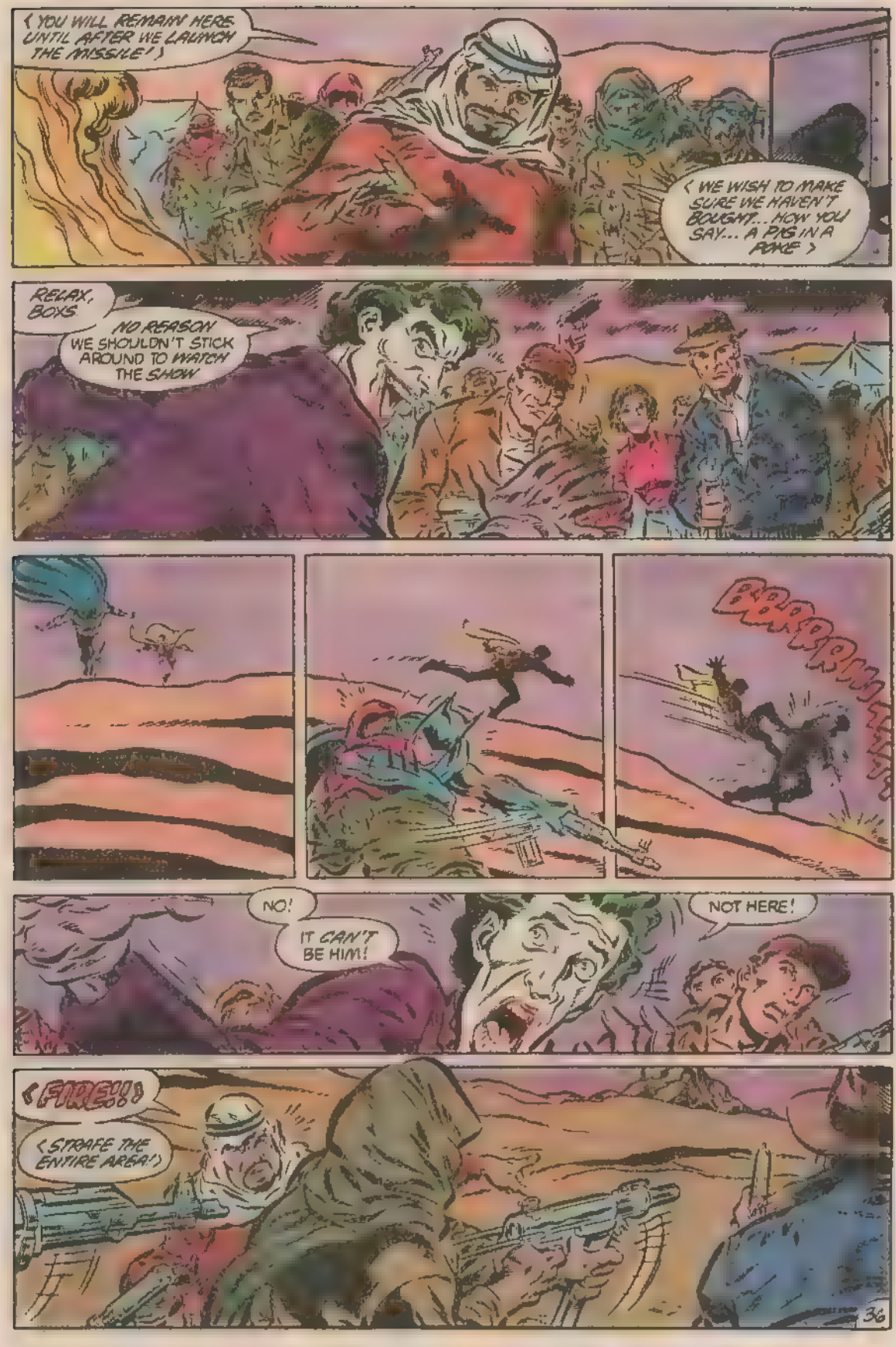
BRUCE!
I ASKED YOU A QUESTION
I'M LOOKING FOR MY MOTHER.
YOUR MOTHER?
JASON, SHE'S DEAD
MY STEPMOTHER'S DEAD, NOT MY REAL MOTHER.
JASON TELLS ME ABOUT FINDING HIS BIRTH CERTIFICATE IN A BOX OF HIS PARENTS' BELONGINGS.
HE'D DISCOVERED HIS TRUE MOTHER'S NAME WAS "S" SOMETHING--NOT CATHERINE
HE'D FOUND THREE WOMEN IN HIS FATHER'S ADDRESS BOOK, WHOSE FIRST NAME STARTED WITH AN "S".
HE'D EVEN TRACKED THEM DOWN, USING THE BAT-CAVE COMPUTER.
THE LADY I'M TRACKING NOW IS SHARMIN ROSEN, AN ISRAELI SERET AGENT
SHIVA WOOSAN, A SUSPECTED MERCENARY, IS ALSO IN BEIRUT.
LASTLY THERE'S DR SHEILA HAYWOOD, WORKING ON FAMINE RELIEF IN ETHIOPIA.
ONE OF THEM MUST BE MY MOTHER.
NOT NECESSARILY.
GUESS I REALIZE THAT
BUT I'VE GOT THIS GUT FEELING..
BESIDES, WITH YOU COMING TO HELP ME, WE'LL CRACK THE MYSTERY OF WHO MY MOTHER IS IN NO TIME
JASON
...THAT'S NOT EXACTLY WHY I'M HERE.

HE LISTENS TO ME TELL ABOUT THIS AFFAIR WITH THE JOKER
THE NUCLEAR THREAT HAD TO BE DEALT WITH FIRST
YOU UNDERSTAND, DON'T YOU?
SURE, BRUCE.
NOTHING GLAMOROUS ABOUT HUNTING DOWN A RUNAWAY.
JASON, THAT'S UNFAIR
WHO CARES!
LOOK! OVER THERE! THAT'S
PETER BRANDO!
SHARMIN ROSEN!
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE WORKING ON THE SAME CASE AFTER ALL
THEY'RE GETTING INTO A CAR!
THIS WAY! I'VE A LAND ROVER!
32


"BRUCE, THEY'LL SPOT US FOLLOWING THEM ON A DESERTED ROAD LIKE THIS!"
"NO PROBLEM"
I'VE SOMETHING HERE THAT WILL TURN US INVISIBLE
GET INTO YOUR ROBIN OUTFIT.
IF WE STAY FAR ENOUGH BACK, EVEN IF THEY DO SEE OUR JET POWERED HANG-GLIDERS, THEY'LL MISTAKE US FOR BIRDS
IT'S FUNNY THAT I DECIDED TO BRING A SPARE GLIDER ALONG.
MAYBE I'M GETTING PREDOGNITIVE IN MY OLD AGE.
EVEN UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT FEELS GOOD HAVING JASON BY MY SIDE AGAIN.

WE SHADOW THEM INTO THE NIGHT, AS THEY CONTINUE HEADING SOUTH
THEY FINALLY STOP AT A CAMP NEAR THE ISRAELI BORDER
WE'LL SNEAK UP TO THE CAMP BY FOOT FROM HERE
HOW'S IT GOIN' HERE, RUPERT?
MANAGEABLE WHO'S THE BROAD?
NAME'S SHARMYN SHE'S FROM JERSEY SHE'S OKAY
GUESS IF YOU VOUCH FOR HER, IT'S ALL RIGHT
YOU GET THE MONEY FROM THESE BANDITS-IN-BEDSHEETS' PALS?
RIGHT IN THIS CASE ONE MILLION DOLLARS!
THEN AS MONTY SAYS, "IT'S TIME FOR US TO MAKE A DEAL.


I'VE GOT THE CASH, SO YOU ARE NOW THE [redacted] OWNERS OF A BRAND-NEW 1988 CRUISE MISSILE!!
I, MYSELF, STOLE, DISMANTLED, AND REASSEMBLED THIS FIRECRACKER AFTER SMUGGLING IT INTO YOUR COUNTRY!
YOU'VE MADE YOURSELF AN EXCELLENT BUY, GENTLEMEN.
YOU HAVE THE JOKER'S WORD ON IT!
I'M MORE INTERESTED IN GETTING THE FIRING CODE AND COORDINATES FOR THE TARGET WE DISCUSSED.
OF COURSE, JAMAL!
HERE YOU GO, PAL!
PRETTY ANXIOUS TO SHOOT YOUR NEW TOY AT TEL AVIV, AREN'T YOU?
WELL, ENJOY YOURSELVES MY BOYS AND I WILL BE RUNNING ALONG NOW.
TA-TA!
I DON'T THINK SO
35


(YOU WILL REMAIN HERE UNTIL AFTER WE LAUNCH THE MISSILE!)
(WE WISH TO MAKE SURE WE HAVEN'T BOUGHT... NOW YOU SAY... A PIG IN A POKE)
RELAX, BOYS
NO REASON WE SHOULDN'T STICK AROUND TO WATCH THE SHOW
BRRRRRRRRRR
NO!
IT CAN'T BE HIM!
NOT HERE!
(FIRE!!)
(STRAFE THE ENTIRE AREA!)

(NO ONE COULD HAVE SURVIVED THAT BARRAGE!)
HE COULD.
(EVERYBODY RELOAD!)
(YOU'RE GOING TO CHECK ON WHO WAS OUT THERE!)
(I WILL REMAIN BEHIND TO GUARD THE MISSILE!)
RUPERT, YOU STAY ALSO AND KEEP THE MONEY SAFE.
SPREAD OUT AND STAY ALERT!
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.
ARAB TERRORISTS AND AMERICAN SCUM JOINING FORCES TO KILL US.
THERE'S A LESSON TO BE LEARNED FROM THIS.
BUT ROBIN AND I ARE A LITTLE TOO BUSY AT THE MOMENT TO APPRECIATE THE SITUATION'S GEO-POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

WE TAKE IT NICE AND SLOW.
WE WHITTLE THEIR NUMBERS DOWN...
...ONE AT A TIME.
THE DARKNESS IS OUR ALLY
THESE MEN DEPEND TOO MUCH ON GUNS.
THE FEEL OF COLD STEEL IN THEIR HANDS MAKES THEM OVERCONFIDENT..
...MAKES THEM CARELESS.
EASY PICKINGS.
I HEAR THE SNIPER RISE FROM BEHIND THE ROCKS
I'M READY TO ROLL OUT OF HIS LINE OF FIRE...
...BUT END UP NOT HAVING TO
K-TOW
SHARMIN ROSEN, ISRAELI AGENT, JOINS THE FRAY
38

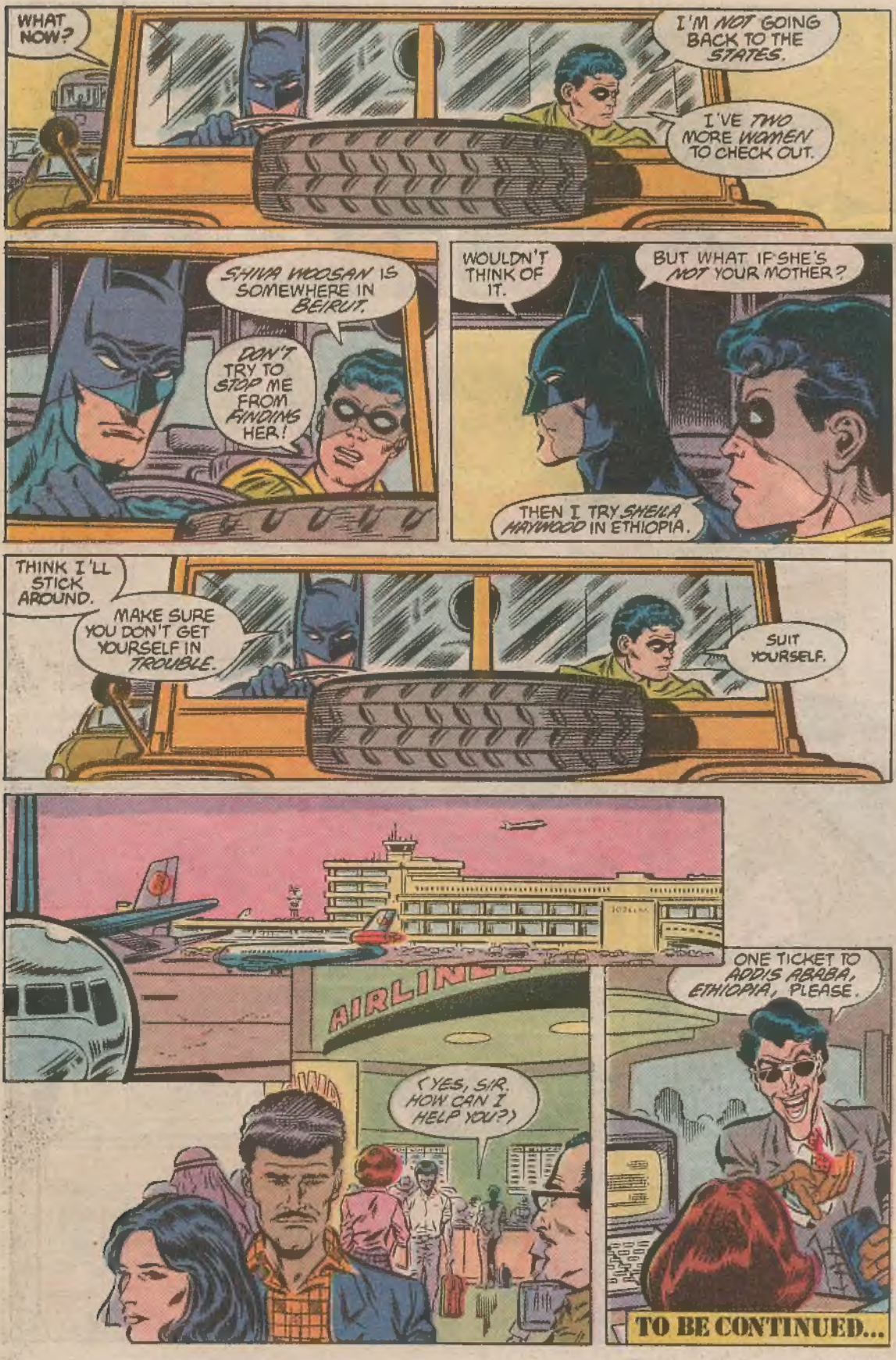
TOO BAD SHE DIDN'T CHECK BEHIND HER BEFORE ACTING
I SAW THAT, YOU LITTLE TRAMP!
GONNA BLOW YOUR BRAINS OUT!
NO!
(WHAT YOU DOING?)
(PUNCHING IN THE COORDINATES FOR TEL AVIV!)
(YOU'RE GONNA FIRE THE ROCKET, NOW?!)
THE BOY'S ANGRY CRY HAS MADE HIM BRANDO'S TARGET..
...JUST AS I'M SURE HE INTENDED.
AT THAT RANGE, BRANDO WILL CUT ROBIN CLEAN IN HALF
I'LL NEVER REACH HIM IN TIME TO STOP HIM FROM FIRING
NO WAY TO SAVE HIM!
NO WAY!
37

ALL THE PROPER CODES ARE IN
WHAT DO I DO NOW?
JUST PUSH THE RED BUTTON
BLAM
THAT ONE THERE?
YEAH, THAT ONE?
PUSH IT!
90

MY GOD!!
WHAT HAPPENED?!
THE MISSILE... IT BLEW UP ON ITS LAUNCHER!!
HOW?!

THE JOKER SAID HE HAD DISMANTLED AND RE-ASSEMBLED THE ROCKET.
OBVIOUSLY, AS A NUCLEAR ENGINEER, THE JOKER MAKES A GOOD PSYCHOTIC KILLER.
WE'RE LUCKY THE WARHEAD DIDN'T DETONATE ALONG WITH THE ROCKET.
SPEAKING OF THE JOKER, HE ESCAPED AGAIN.
MY MONEY...
ALL MY LOVELY MONEY.. BURNT TO A CRISP...
WHAT EVER WILL I DO NOW?
HOW'D YOUR PEOPLE TUMBLE ONTO THE JOKER'S NUCLEAR FIRE SALE?
SORRY, CAN'T SAY. THAT'S CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.
BUT I MUST THANK YOU. YOU'VE DONE A GREAT SERVICE FOR MY COUNTRY.
THEN HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO RETURN THE FAVOR?
IF I CAN. HOW?
42

BY ANSWERING A QUESTION OR TWO.
SUCH AS?
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO GOTHAM CITY? EVER HAD A BABY THERE?
IS THIS A SURVEY OR SOMETHING?
WELL, HAVE YOU?!
NO. NOT IN GOTHAM CITY.
WHY DID YOU WANT TO KNOW SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
SORRY, CAN'T SAY. THAT'S CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.
BUT I GUESS WE CAN AT LEAST OFFER YOU A LIFT BACK TO BEIRUT.
EVER FLOWN ON A HANG-GLIDER?
MS. ROSEN DIDN'T CARE FOR THE RIDE.
SHE BREATHED A SIGH OF RELIEF WHEN WE TRANSFERRED TO THE LANDROVER.
THE SUN WAS UP BY THE TIME WE REACHED BEIRUT.
NICE LADY.
BUT NOT THE RIGHT LADY, BRUCE.


WHAT NOW?
I'M NOT GOING BACK TO THE STATES.
I'VE TWO MORE WOMEN TO CHECK OUT.
SHIVA WOOSAN IS SOMEWHERE IN BEIRUT.
DON'T TRY TO STOP ME FROM FINDING HER!
WOULDN'T THINK OF IT.
BUT WHAT IF SHE'S NOT YOUR MOTHER?
THEN I TRY SHEILA MAYWOOD IN ETHIOPIA.
THINK I'LL STICK AROUND.
MAKE SURE YOU DON'T GET YOURSELF IN TROUBLE.
SUIT YOURSELF.
AIRLINES
(YES, SIR. HOW CAN I HELP YOU?)
ONE TICKET TO ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, PLEASE.
TO BE CONTINUED...